

# ***Highlights of Changes in the Revised and Updated Professional Standards and Ethics for California Court Interpreters Fourth Edition, June 2008<sup>1</sup>***

In addition to being edited and reorganized for greater clarity and to reflect changes to the numbering system for the California Rules of Court, the fourth edition of this ethics manual for California court interpreters includes the following new content.

## **Qualifications**

Clear definitions of the distinctions between “certified,” “registered,” and “provisionally qualified” court interpreters for spoken languages and the certifications that exist for American Sign Language, p.1.

## **Accuracy, pp. 3–17**

- Expanded instructions on how to handle potentially problematic terms such as proverbs, obscenities, unfamiliar idiomatic expressions, terms for which no standard equivalent exists in the target language, and terms with multiple possible meanings.
- Expanded instructions on handling vocal tone, the expression of emotion, and nonverbal communication.
- Expanded instructions on appropriate actions in the event you hear a colleague make a material error in interpretation.

## **Impartiality and Avoidance of Conflicts of Interest, pp. 18–21**

- Expanded instructions, particularly on how to prevent placing yourself in situations that could compromise your impartiality.
- Maintaining impartiality in multidefendant cases.

## **Confidentiality, p. 23**

Clarification of the standards of confidentiality that apply in different circumstances and of the circumstances in which an interpreter could be called as a witness.

## **Giving Legal Advice, p. 26**

Expanded instructions on how to handle questions by defendants in various settings.

## **Professional Relationships, p. 28**

- Clarification of the interpreter’s role as an officer of the court.
- Current continuing education and work requirements.
- How to prepare for a case and obtain background information and jury instructions.
- Guidelines on using technology in the courtroom.

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<sup>1</sup> Previous edition title: *Professional Ethics and the Role of the Court Interpreter*, third edition.

## **Impediments to Performance**

- Team interpreting: why, when, and how, p. 33.
- Guidelines on when and how to conduct a brief preappearance interview with non-English-speaking parties to acquaint yourself with their speech traits and instruct them about the interpretation procedure, p. 35.
- What to do when an attorney or defendant instructs you not to interpret, p. 35.
- Expanded instructions on how to handle requests for sight translation of documents or in-court interpretation of video or audio recordings, p. 36.

## **Appendix**

- California Rules of Court, rule 2.890 (Professional Conduct for Interpreters), amended and renumbered effective January 1, 2007 (originally adopted as rule 984.4 effective January 1, 1999), p. 40.
- California Evidence Code sections 750–755.5, which specify the types of procedures for which an interpreter is to be engaged, the general terms of engagement for contract and employee interpreters, and the required interpreter qualifications for each type of proceeding, p. 43.
- California Standards of Judicial Administration, standards 2.10 and 2.11 (amended and renumbered effective January 1, 2007; repealed and adopted as section 18 effective January 1, 1999), which cover the procedures for determining the need for an interpreter and the preappearance interview, p. 49.
- Compliance Requirements for Certified Court Interpreters and Registered Interpreters of Nondesignated Languages. Revised June 10, 2008, p. 53.
- Standards for Performance and Professional Responsibility for Contract Court Interpreters in the Federal Courts, p. 64.